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AUTHOR

Aker, George F.; Powell, Toni

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ABSTRACT

This book is designed for Executive Directors in Adult Basic Education, delineating his various roles and responsibilities. Although his primary responsibility is related to his administrative or managerial role, other roles which he shares in common with the instructional staff are: as teacher or educator, as planner, as evaluator, and as Action Researcher. The responsibilities of the Executive Director for program development are: (1) determining the needs of the target population and determining project goals; (2) translating goals and needs into specific objectives; (3) recruiting, selecting, and training staff; (4) program promotion and student recruitment; (5) in-service training and staff development; (6) program implementation; (7) provision of instruction; (8) evaluation; and (9) program modification in accordance with evaluation results. (DB)

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DEVELOPING AND MANAGING ADULT  
BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

George F. Aker

and

Toni Powell

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

March 1970  
Tallahassee, Florida

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## INTRODUCTION

This book is designed for Executive Directors in Adult Basic Education—popularly known as ABE. While primarily aimed at those new to the exciting and challenging ABE field, it is hoped that it will also provide ideas to experienced directors as well and that it will reinforce some of the skills and successful practices which they have already acquired.

## THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Although the United States is considered to be one of the most literate countries in the world, some 20 million American adults cannot effectively read or write. They are operating below the eighth grade level of proficiency and can therefore, be called "functionally illiterate." These are the so-called undereducated, disadvantaged, and alienated members of our society. They are usually unemployed or underemployed and are the first to be replaced by automation and technical advances. Generally speaking, they have the highest incidence of disease and poor health, the lowest level of nutrition, the largest families, and the lowest incomes. Within this target audience of more than 20 million adults are some eight million below the fifth grade level (those who cannot read a newspaper with understanding, or fill out an employment application form) and some three million who are totally illiterate--who cannot read or write in any language.

Many believe that the abilities acquired through a high school education represent the minimum level required to live effectively in today's society. If this is true, then the target audience for ABE is closer to 60 million--about one-half of our adult population!

Illiteracy may be the greatest socio-economic challenge of our time. The future status of our society may well depend upon your success and the success of others like you who have the primary responsibility for planning and operating ABE programs.

Much has been written about the magnitude of adult illiteracy in the United States in recent years, and you should be (or become) familiar with the major writings in this area. 12, 13, 22

Suffice it to say that even with greatly expanded efforts, the area of ABE will continue to provide thousands of full-time career positions well into the foreseeable future.

## THE ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Just as the ABE teacher has primary responsibility for planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating classroom learning experiences, the Executive Director has responsibility for planning, organizing and evaluating the overall project. Although emphasis is primarily on his administrative or managerial capacity, the Executive Director must assume roles which are quite similar to the instructional roles of the teacher. The following are areas in which the Director and the instructional staff share similar responsibilities:

1. The role of teacher or educator. ABE teachers are responsible for arranging and producing effective learning experiences for their students. Directors are responsible for designing effective pre-service and in-service training programs for the various members of the project staff--e.g., supervisors, counselors, teachers, teacher aides, secretarial and clerical personnel. This does not mean that it is necessary for the Executive Director to actually perform as an instructor toward the staff. Rather, he should provide a full program of training, utilizing available resources, services and materials. The emphasis here is on design and not on actual instructional involvement.

In addition, the administrator should initiate an informative program directed toward the various interest groups in the community. It should relate the purpos of ABE, the scope of the problem, its financial requirements, community development projects, etc.

The Director must also provide a program of leadership training for his various board members and advisory committee members if they are to perform as effectively as possible. By developing such a program the Director is actually performing a "teacher" role. However, unlike the teacher, the Director should not participate as the leader. He must make use of subtle techniques in order to assist the various board and committee members to develop their own leadership abilities. If a Director takes on a dominant leadership role, the development of leadership within the group itself may be stifled, making them too dependent upon the direction of the Director. It is necessary to remember that the board's primary responsibility is one of decision-making and that the Director must administer and carry out these decisions. In contrast to the ABE teacher who is usually limited to the classroom as a means for organizing learning, the Director is able to utilize a wide variety of educational methods including workshops, conferences, seminars, problem-oriented study groups and the mass media (newspaper stories, radio and TV programs, etc.)

2. The role of planner. Just as good teachers invest considerable time in planning activities, so do effective Executive Directors. High effective adult education administrators report that up to one-third of their time is given to various planning activities. Areas of responsibility which require considerable planning include: program promotion and student recruitment, fiscal arrangements, material and supply purchases, evaluation, and action research.

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It should be pointed out that a good planner is also a good educator. To plan effectively, those affected by the program (staff, teachers, students, advisory committee members and selected representatives of the community) must be deeply involved in the planning process and problem solving activities. In this regard the role of the administrator, like the role of the teacher, is to help others by identifying needs, determining objectives, collecting the required information, analyzing alternative solutions and deciding upon specific actions to be taken.

3. The role of evaluator. Whereas ABE teachers are responsible for determining the achievement of their instructional objectives and measuring student progress, the Executive Director is responsible for evaluating the various elements of the entire program. He must acquire data on the efficiency and effectiveness of the program in relation to the overall goals and specific objectives. He is expected to know what it costs (in terms of time, staff, physical and financial resources) to increase the educational levels of the participants. He must make comparative analyses between the various centers and the total program in order to identify problem areas which need immediate or long range attention. In addition, he must be able to supply information to his funding agency and the general public in relation to attendance data, drop-out rate, job placement, job referrals, and other criteria of the program's success or failure.

Effective evaluation involves the use of internal as well as external resources. It also requires utmost cooperation among all members of the project staff. Evaluation is the key factor in continuously improving and strengthening the program, in correcting areas of deficiency or need, and in justifying the program to those who support it.

4. The role of action researcher. Project Directors, like teacher, are responsible for conducting and stimulating action research to discover new and better methods and procedures, to improve materials, to test out new ideas before adapting them on a large scale basis and to solve a variety of administrative and program development problems.

Professional educators should do everything possible to keep up with the considerable research now being conducted in ABE and related areas. However, the findings of research frequently need to be "field tested" or tried out in a pilot project before one can be confident they are valid for a given situation. Consequently the administrator will want to establish demonstration projects and experimental classes in order to validate new systems, materials or procedures before adopting

them throughout the project.

As in evaluation, action research involves much planning, considerable staff training, and full cooperation by all members of the project staff. For further information, read: "Research for Action Programs," by George F. Aker and Wayne L. Schroeder, Nathan C. Shaw (Ed.) Administration of Continuing Education, National Association for Public School Adult Education, Washington, D. C. 1969.

#### THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Thus far we have seen how the roles and responsibilities of ABE teachers and directors are quite similar. Let us now examine the responsibilities of the Director from a program development point of view. There are at least eight stages in the program development process for which the Executive Director has the overall and final responsibility. These are illustrated below.

Each of the illustrated eight stages is crucial to the success or failure of the ABE program. Programs not geared to the needs of students are of little value. Staff members who are haphazardly recruited or poorly trained will not be able to fulfill their responsibilities.

Inadequate promotion and student recruitment procedures will mean few participants. Ineffective implementation of the program will result in a high dropout rate, little or no learning among students, and poor morale among the staff--in other words--a total loss. Finally, without a plan for systematic and continuous evaluation, there is neither a way to identify areas of weakness and areas for improvement nor a rational basis for introducing change.

In moving through the program development process, the Director should delegate responsibility and authority to the fullest extent possible. For example, determining needs might best be accomplished by advisory committees in consultation with selected teachers. Responsibilities for recruitment might be shared by center super-visors. Staff training may be the primary responsibility of an associate director, and much of what we have called "program implementation" may become the responsibility of the ABE teacher.

Viewed in this light, the Executive Director's primary responsibility becomes one of establishing a system of information collection and communication for the purpose of decision making. He must be informed of all decisions made by those to whom he has

delegated authority. To aid him in making sound decisions in areas where he has not delegated authority, a system of information input should be implemented. He must become an expert in the communication process and must recognize when it is not functioning properly. He must also be highly effective in the art of human relations and in facilitating democratic group leadership. Finally, like his teachers, he must be professionally dedicated and personally committed to the philosophy and purpose of adult basic education.

The following sections will discuss separately each of the responsibilities which have been presented in the illustration.<sup>8</sup>

#### DETERMINING THE NEEDS OF THE TARGET POPULATION

#### AND DETERMINING PROJECT GOALS

As an Executive Director it is important that you thoroughly understand the goals of ABE and that you have a deep personal commitment to them. ABE is any process through which under-educated men or women learn to live more effectively through the acquisition and application of knowledge, skills, and appreciation. Although the primary focus of ABE may be on any one or more of the following areas, emphasis today is on acquiring basic literacy skills and pre-vocational orientation:

1. Prevocation or vocational/technical skill development
2. Improvement in home and family life
3. Use of financial resources and consumer education
4. Child development and family planning
5. Social and civic responsibility
6. Use of community education
7. Health and safety education
8. Inter-personal relations
9. Self-fulfillment

Although the listing above does not completely represent all the important content areas of ABE, it does indicate that ABE is centered around adult problems, wants, interest, and needs. Havighurst's concept of social role and developmental tasks has many implications for determining the goals of Adult Basic Education.<sup>9</sup>

Adult, as defined by Havighurst, are those persons who are expected to assume the responsibilities of caring for themselves or others. They have certain social roles which they must perform effectively if they are to lead successful and rewarding lives. In this regard the adult at some point in the life cycle usually fulfills the role of worker, spouse, parent, builder of a home environment, citizen, friend, consumer of goods, child of aging parents, and user of leisure time. The adult's success, or lack of success, in performing these roles largely determines his self-concept, his feelings of adequacy and competence, his adjustment to life, his happiness and his relationship to others.

Adults of all ages occupy various social roles and as a result will perform different developmental tasks. Therefore, the educator will "know his audience" by their individual differences or similarities in their social roles and then will relate these differences or similarities to their developmental tasks.

For example, the young expectant mother is usually 'ready' and highly motivated to learn about pre-natal care and care of the newborn infant. On the other hand, this area of knowledge holds little attraction to the middle-aged widow whose children have already left home and who must now learn to adjust to a life without her spouse on a reduced income.

For a comprehensive treatment of the general and specific goals of ABE, the reader is invited to read:

Bibliography for Migrant Education Programs<sup>4</sup>

Report of the Proceedings of the Leadership Training  
Institute for Public School Adult Basic Education<sup>7</sup>

The Adult Basic Education Curriculum and Its Development<sup>11</sup>

Adult Basic Education for Personal and Family Development<sup>17</sup>

Adult Basic Education—Meeting the Challenge of the 1970's<sup>25</sup>

National Conference on Education of the Disadvantaged<sup>26</sup>

In general, the target audience for ABE consists of "disadvantaged adults." "Disadvantaged" is of course a "loaded" term and we must use caution to not trick ourselves into believing that all disadvantaged adults exhibit the same qualities. For the purpose of this book, we will simply say that the "disadvantaged adult" is one who has not received the education which is necessary for him to effectively function in society.

Actually, there are probably many more differences than there are similarities among members of the audience for ABE. They differ from one another in their ages, sex, years in or out of school, grade level completed, income, attitude, reading ability, status role in their neighborhood, rate of learning, sense of vision and hearing, general health, size of family, marital status, past experience, like or dislike of school, fear of failure, need for security, perception of you, etc.

In a "typical" ABE classroom, some students will be very bright, learn very fast, and know more than their teacher about many things. Others will be much slower, will show little progress, and will be withdrawn and alienated from the situation. Most will be someplace between these two extremes. The great ranges in experience, in abilities and in interests are factors which help make ABE an exciting and challenging professional career.

## TRANSLATING GOALS AND NEEDS INTO SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Being familiar with the goals of ABE is only useful to the extent that it allows you to translate these goals into specific learning objectives which may lead to a desired behavioral change among your students. In other words--be practical.

Lessons on community resources (welfare agencies, legal services cooperatives, etc.) should involve the use of these resources by your participants. Teaching about the responsibilities of citizenship should result in a measureable or demonstratable understanding of social and political issues and voting behavior.

Stated more specifically, participants in ABE should learn to read and write and then should use this skill to read and answer letters, to write to the President--or any political leader--if they want to grumble about conditions or recommend changes, to sign checks to feel more involved in the world around them, to learn, to grow, etc.

ABE students should learn to compute interest, to make change accurately and quickly, to tell if they are being cheated, to recognize a good bargain, to tell time, to identify danger signals in regard to their health, to provide adequate diets for their families, to obtain and hold a job, to advance on the job, to raise a garden, to read road maps, to distinguish labels on medicine bottles, pesticides, insect sprays and on and on.

It is important that the Director realize too many teachers in ABE are "hung up" on the three R's. They mistakenly believe that the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic is their primary goal. Nonsense! The development of literacy skills and learning tools is extremely important. However, the skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, computing, and thinking should be the natural and continuous by-product of learning all the other important things adults need to know. Students who are learning to solve their own problems and who have learning resources geared toward their needs, hopes and wants learn quickly and effectively. They reinforce their learning through the application of their newfound knowledge or skill

The goals and objectives which you will emphasize in ABE will depend upon the nature and purpose of your agency, the nature and needs of your participants, and personal understandings and philosophy of ABE.

The primary or ultimate goal of ABE should be the development of motivation for continued or life-long learning and the acquisition of the skills required to be an effective and continuing learner. Remember, society's educational system has already failed your ABE students--you may be their last chance. If you succeed, your participants will go on learning through job training and retraining programs, through participation in organizations and associations of various kinds, through independent study, reading, listening and viewing activities, through high school completion programs, and, for some, through community colleges or universities.

## RECRUITING, SELECTING AND TRAINING STAFF

Prior to implementing a recruitment program, it is necessary for the Director to determine the staffing needs of his program. He must answer such questions as: (1) How many eligible students are there? (2) How many students per staff member? (3) How many staff members per class? (4) How many people needed for administration? (5) What will the program's budget allow?

As these and related questions concerning needs are answered, a staffing pattern will evolve. This pattern will include position titles, number of people needed for each position, salary range, and job descriptions.

job descriptions. The staffing pattern should also allow for the upward mobility of each person in a given position. Therefore, an adjunct to the staffing pattern will be the personnel policies for the program.

During this planning phase, it is important to remember that your staffing needs must reflect the goals and objectives of your program and must be within the limits of your budget.

It is necessary that the Director also establish the criteria for selecting staff members. The basic criteria for all classroom staff is that they understand and are committed to the goals and objectives of your program. The burden is with the Director, therefore, to adequately communicate these goals and objectives to the applicants.

During the selection phase, the Director should have a clear idea of the characteristics desired for each position, particularly for classroom staff. Although research suggests that the most effective teachers in ABE tend to be the younger, less experienced teachers who have not completed four years of college, it should be pointed out that the very best teachers in ABE (as measured by student success) can be found in all age groups and at all levels of experience. As in all areas of education, the good ABE teacher turns out to be the one who is interested in each student, who individualizes the instruction (almost to the point where each student thinks the teacher exists only for him), who accepts people as they are and where they are, without reservations, who uses regard and not punishment, who can join with the students and laugh at himself, who knows the subject matter, and who does a great variety of things to actively involve the student in the learning process.

Some people have maintained the misconception that 'anyone who has taught in elementary education will do well in adult basic education.' Some people seem to be good teachers at any level and with any age group. However, a successful career in teaching children does not guarantee automatic success in ABE. In fact it has been found that some teachers of children find it exceedingly difficult to orientate themselves toward the adult situation. Adults cannot be looked at as large children!

Effective teachers in ABE tend to exhibit four prominent characteristics: (1) They spend considerable time in planning; (2) They individualize instruction and make it practical in terms of the interests, needs and wants of their students; (3) They are highly flexible; and (4) They use a wide variety of methods and techniques. It is important that the Director look for these characteristics during the selection phase and that he provide the type of leadership, direction, and atmosphere which would allow his staff to develop.

It is anticipated that teacher aides will be included in the program. If this is true, it should be remembered that a person's potential ability should be the primary consideration in the selection process. Since establishing potential ability might become a difficult task, a few indicators may prove helpful.

1. Interest, enthusiasm, and, above all, desire.
2. If possible, experience in working with adults.
3. Sufficient proficiency to communicate not only in English but also in the language of the population.
4. A rapport with the people or a potential for rapport.

After the staff has been selected, a program of pre-service training must be designed and implemented before the start of the ABE program. It is essential to remember that pre-service training must be provided for individuals who will join the staff after the program has started. Therefore, the Director should develop a "training package" which can be used repeatedly.

The "training package" should be assembled before the first day of training and each person should receive a personal copy. The package should include all of the following and any similar materials which are pertinent to your specific program:

1. Personnel policies.
2. Outline review of standarized forms and procedures. This is important for the collection of information to implement your reporting system, as well as to carry out administrative functions.
3. A review of available instructional material.
4. A review of several methods and techniques.
5. Demonstration of the use of the available equipment.
6. Bibliography or suggested reading list of materials concerning the target population. Some of these materials should be available through the program.

Each of the above items should be reviewed and discussed during the pre-service training sessions. If possible, these discussions should be recorded on tape and be made available to individuals who have joined the program after it is in operation. These tapes will then reduce the amount of valuable staff time needed for training. Of course, the late joiner should be allowed the opportunity to meet with the staff and to discuss his areas of concern once he has become familiar with the training package.

All of the materials developed and selected for use in the pre-service training must re-emphasize the goals and objectives of your program. You can never emphasize these too much!

#### PROGRAM PROMOTION AND STUDENT RECRUITMENT

It was stated earlier that the Director must perform a role similar to that of a teacher by providing various interest groups with information about the ABE program.

Carrying out an effective public relations program is important for several reasons:

1. It enlightens the general community.
2. It provides a means of informing other agencies which may lead to better cooperation and coordination or resources and services.
3. It can lead to a greater acceptance and a larger base of support in the community. This is important in terms of attempting to involve the private section of the community, particularly for job development and placement.
4. It helps to develop a sense of acceptance for the participants when they are involved in a program which is widely accepted by the community.

An Executive Director should develop and maintain a rapport with the various media. This will provide him with the means to communicate to large numbers of people without using a great deal of time. He should make maximum use of public service "spots" on radio and television. Press releases should be a responsibility of his office.

As interest about the program is generated within the community, perhaps a feature article in a newspaper, or an editorial on television or radio would be within the realm of possibility.

The Director should keep other public and private agencies informed of the purpose, goals and objectives of the program. Initially, perhaps a letter of introduction could be sent to each agency. Later, an effort should be made to establish personal contact with each agency. Contact with these agencies serves a dual purpose: (1) It informs others about the program; (2) It will assist the Director in learning about other resources and services available to his students.

The Director should also attempt to reach various interest groups in the community. Perhaps a letter of introduction can be used initially. However, the best method for reaching these groups is through speaking engagements.

The public relations program should also prove helpful for student recruitment. Other agencies may begin referring individuals to your program. Radio and television announcements will directly contact potential students. Newspapers, of course, are not an effective means of reaching people who cannot read. But, perhaps their friends and relatives who can read will spread the news. Posters placed in storefront windows can be a technique for recruiting though limited in the same way as newspapers.

Direct personal contact is probably the best means of recruiting students. The Director should make arrangement to address neighborhood meetings, welfare councils, PTA'S, church groups, etc. The Director will have to find out to what type of groups and/or organizations the target population belongs.

## IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In order to build an effective program base, the Director must select staff members who will be effective in performing their duties. He must also insure that project staff continue to be effective as the program becomes operational. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to provide staff training.

In-service training is a vital part of ABE. As was stated earlier, the students in any ABE classroom will probably be diverse in terms of their motivation, age, experience, interests, etc. Because of this the teacher will have to provide individualized instruction to the maximum degree within a group situation. This is not an easy task. In order to accomplish individualized instruction, the teacher must be able to examine and explore the various methods, techniques, and materials used in ABE. Through in-service training, the staff as a group can discuss and examine their various problems and concerns, analyze research finds, and examine new methods, techniques and materials. They will be able to draw upon each others experience, knowledge, and insight.

The Director must assume the responsibility for providing the time, leadership, and resources for in-service training. He must be aware, however, of the needs of his staff and must allow for their suggestions, input, and involvement in planning training programs.

Staff development is usually viewed as a more formal program of training than is in-service training. It is a system of upgrading or promoting individual staff members. Because it is a system of upgrading, it implies more than just filling vacancies as they occur in the staffing pattern. Just as teachers must individualize the instructional program, the Director in consultation with each staff member, should design an individualized program for staff development.

It does not necessarily follow that a clerk typist wants to become a stenographer, secretary, and finally, office manager. Her ambition may really be toward teaching—beginning as a teacher aide, then teacher, and perhaps eventually a certified teacher.

First, the Director should discuss with each staff member his personal goals. Second, if possible, a professional counselor can assist in determining the capabilities and potential of each individual. Perhaps arrangements can be made with a local college to perform this service. Cost is, of course, a consideration here. It may not be feasible for the program or the individual to pay for this service. It is important, though, that the individual set goals for himself which are within his range of capabilities and potential achievement. Third, the Director should outline for the individual exactly what he must accomplish to be eligible to move into the next position on the upgrading ladder. Fourth, each person should be encouraged to strive for his goals and should be rewarded for his efforts.

The Director should provide information on available resources in the community which can assist the individual. This information should include the requirements for acceptance into various training programs, vocational schools, community colleges or universities. Also, he should provide information about costs and means of obtaining financial assistance. Those who have achieved "professional" status and who want to continue growing in their field will be interested in learning about and attending various seminars, institutes, workshops, and conferences.

It is unlikely that any ABE program will have the available funds to provide staff members with the financial assistance needed for their development program. How, the Director should make every effort to assist the individual with his efforts. If necessary and feasible, the person should be allowed time from his duties to attend courses or other activities which are a part of his development. The Director should continue to encourage each person and should maintain an interest in his progress.

It should be remembered that although staff development is important, it cannot interfere with your primary objective--implementing an effective ABE program. The Director cannot allow the activities of the staff members to jeopardize the progress of the students.

#### PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

All of the preceding discussions have been directed toward preparation for actual program implementation. In order to begin your program of instruction, you must make final preparation in three areas: physical resources; selection of methods, techniques, content, and materials; and provision of instruction.

Physical Resources - this includes not only selecting a site but also procuring equipment and consumable supplies. Selecting the proper sites for classrooms or centers is an important decision. The site must be in a convenient location for the target population. Frequently, students are not willing or able to travel any distance to attend classes. If it is not possible to find a site close to the student population, then a transportation system must be provided. Volunteer car pools or transportation cooperatives may be ways of dealing with this problem and also ways of involving volunteers in your program. Perhaps bus service can be provided. The local school districts or churches may be willing to assist you with this. The cost of transportation will be a problem for your program just as it is for your students. You must attempt to find the least expensive method of providing this service.

The site that is selected must be large enough to provide adequate space for all of the activities included in the program. Is there enough classroom space? Are the classrooms large enough to accommodate the number of people in the program? Is there at least one room which can be used for films, slides, and overhead

projectors? Is there adequate storage space? Will it be necessary to renovate or remodel? What would be the cost? Is the lighting adequate? Of course, the best possible situation to have would be a school district which would allow you to use a building and its equipment in just the right location. However, stores, warehouses, or other facilities can also provide adequate and pleasant space which will serve your purposes.

Equipment must be selected within the limits of your budget. Movie and slide projectors, tape recorders, and overhead projectors can be valuable assets to your program and can provide a greater selection of methods and techniques for your teachers. However, the value must be weighed against the cost and considered in relation to the operating budget.

Desks, tables, chairs, blackboards, bulletin boards, etc., must also be provided. This type of equipment should be obtained after the site has been selected to order to make maximum use of the available space.

Consumable supplies must be purchased and ready for use on the first day of the program. Supplies include paper, duplicating material, pens, pencils, chalk, erasers, staples and staplers, etc. This material should be readily available for both classroom staff as well as administrative staff.

Selection of methods, techniques, content and material  
many programs have been developed around just one method, the rationale being that "what worked for some will work for all." Unfortunately, no one method, regardless of its previous successes with a group of students, will be effective for all students or for all learning goals. To help you familiarize yourself with "what has been used before," below is a brief list of several different approaches:

#### Specific Techniques and Materials for Teaching Reading and Arithmetic

The most commonly used techniques for teaching adults reading and mathematics skills are:

##### The Basal Reader Approach

There are many excellent basal readers available which are written for adults in a manner which they find interesting and pertinent to their needs and interests. When using materials implementing this approach, the teacher must remember these points:

- A. Choose passages and exercises carefully from the text. Most basal readers move too quickly for the individual student and should not be relied upon as the only text for teaching the reading skill. It is recommended that several different readers be used on the same grade level.
- B. The teacher will have to work very closely with the student in using this technique. Usually, the correct answers to problems and questions are not accessible to the student. Little explanation of

instructions for doing problems is given, and quite often, they are written above the student's independent reading level.

#### Suggested Basal Reading Materials

Mott Basic Language Skills Program. Allied Education Council, Galien, Mich. (1965). (Readability Levels 1-12)

Reading for a Purpose. Educational Opportunities Project, Follett Publishing Co., Chicago, Illinois (1965). (Readability Levels 1-4)

Steps to Learning, Books 1 & 2. Steck-Vaughn Co., Austin, Texas (1965). (Readability Levels 1-3)

Adult Reader. Steck-Vaughn Co., Austin, Texas (1949). (Level 2)

Reader's Digest Adult Series. Readers Digest Services, Inc., Pleasantville, New York (1964) - 65. (Levels 1-4)

Figure It Out; Book 1. Follett Publishing Co., Chicago, Ill. (1965). (Levels 1-4)

Reading for Meaning. J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, Pa. (1962). (Levels 4-6)

Using the Context. Barnell Lofe, Long Island, New York (1962). (Levels 4-6)

Step Up Your Reading Power. McGraw-Hill Book Co., Webster Division, Atlanta, Ga. (1966). (Levels 4-8)

#### English as a Second Language

English This Way Series. Macmillan Co., New York, N. Y. (1963). (Levels 1-6)

Live and Learn. Noble and Noble Publishers, Inc., New York, N. Y. (1962)

#### The Experience Approach

In using this technique, the teacher aids the students in creating and developing stories from their backgrounds and common experiences. The stories, which use vocabulary familiar to the students, are typed up and given back to them. A basic vocabulary is devised. It is an excellent approach to develop group discussion and oral language skills. However, it should not be relied upon extensively. Also, there is little way to

account for individual abilities and needs.

Suggested Reading for Teaching Using this Method:

Lee, D. and Allen, R. V., Learning to Read Through Experience.  
New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963.

The Programmed Instruction Approach

This technique allows students to progress at their own rate and speed. It provides immediate feedback. The student has a very low failure rate. This approach is quite effective for some students, but others will find it dull and frustrating.

Suggested Programmed Materials

Programmed Reading for Adults. McGraw-Hill Book Company,  
New York, N. Y. (1966). Levels 1-4)

Programmed Math for Adults. McGraw Book Company, New York,  
N. Y. 91966). (Levels 1-4)

Building Your Language Power. Silver Burdett Company,  
Morristown, N. J. (1965). (Levels 1-6)

Reading. Behavioral Research Laboratories, Palo Alto,  
Calif. (1966). (Levels 1-4)

Learning How to Use the Dictionary. Macmillian Co., New York, N.Y. (1963)

Building Reading Power. Charles E. Merrill Company, Columbus,  
Ohio (1963). (Level) 5)

Steps to Better Reading. Harcourt, Brace & World, New York, N. Y.  
(1964). (Levels 7-8)

Programmed Vocabulary. Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, N. Y.  
(1964). (Levels 8-10)

Consumer Mathematics, Series. Behavioral Research Laboratories,  
Palo Alto, Calif. (1964). (Levels 8-10)

Words. Science Research Associates, Chicago, Ill. (1962).  
(Levels 8-10)

The "Packaged Program" Approach

Reading Development Kits, A, B, and C. Addison-Wesley Co., Inc., Reading, Mass. (1960). (Levels 1.7-9.0)

Learning 100, Look and Write. Educational Development Laboratories, Huntington, N. Y. (Levels 1-6)

SRA Reading Laboratories. Science Research Associates, Chicago, Ill. (Levels 1-9)

Lessons for Self-Instruction in Basic Skills. California Test Bureau, Monterey, Calif. (1963). (Levels 3-9)

SRA Reading for Understanding: Junior Edition. Science Research Assoc., Chicago, Ill. (Levels 3-8)

EDL Study Skills-Library for Social Studies. Educational Development Lab., Huntington, N. Y. (1962). (Levels 4-9)

EDL Study Skills-Library for Reference. Educational Development Lab., Huntington, N. Y. (Levels 4-9)

EDL Study Skills-Library for Science. Educational Development Lab., Huntington, N. Y. (Levels 4-9)

Dimensions in Reading. Manpower & Natural Resources, Science Research Assoc., Chicago, Ill. (Levels 4-11)

Spelling Word Power Laboratory. Science Research Associates, Chicago, Ill. (Levels 5-10)

Why Work Series. Behavioral Research Lab., Palo Alto, Calif. (1969). (Levels 2-7)

Individualized English, Set. J. Follett Pub. Co., Chicago, Ill. (1964) (Levels 7-9)!

SRA Reading for Understanding. Science Research Associates, Chicago, Ill. (Levels 5-12)

For more information about the materials listed here and others, see A Selected Annotated Bibliography of Instructional Literacy Materials for Adult Basic Education<sup>23</sup> and Bibliography for Migrant Education Programs.<sup>4</sup>

## Testing

Before the teacher can assign material, she must first determine the reading and mathematic level of the student at the time he enters the classroom. She can determine these levels by two types of measurements: (1) informal reading inventories and (2) standardized oral and silent reading tests. Usually, both of these are used over the course of an ABE program.

An adult student should be tested for three reading levels: (1) the potential level, which is the highest level he can comprehend when the material is read to him, (2) the instructional level, at which he can recognize over 90 percent of the words, and (3) the independent level, at which he can recognize over 95 percent of the words, and which is usually one grade level below his instructional level.

A standardized reading test should be given more than once to a student, usually shortly after his entrance into the ABE program, in the middle of the program, and at the end. It is recommended that results on these tests be evaluated carefully. There are very few standardized reading tests specifically designed for under-educated adults; the ones that have been designed have many flaws in them. Also, scores tend to be inflated on these tests, especially when the tests are given the first time.

### Standardized Silent Reading Tests

Gray-Votaw-Rogers General Achievement Test. Steck-Vaughn Company, Austin, Texas.

Stanford Achievement Test. Psychological Corp. (The), New York, N. Y.

Metropolitan Achievement Tests. Psychological Corp. (The), New York, N. Y.

California Reading Tests. California Test Bureau, Monterey, Calif.

Gates Reading Survey. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, N. Y.

Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE). Harcourt, Brace & World, New York, N. Y.

## Informal Reading Inventories

Informal reading inventories can be devised by the teacher, and should include a check-list of skills or specific difficulties involved in vocabulary recognition, vocabulary meaning, comprehension, and rate. For more specific information in devising an informal reading inventory,<sup>24</sup> see Adult Education; Teaching Reading in Adult Basic Education.

### Readability

Every ABE teacher should be able to determine the readability level of written material. This is especially important in deciding which materials to use in testing and evaluating students. Many published materials are graded, and some include reading inventories which can be used to determine the students' reading or math levels. However, it is sometimes necessary or helpful to use ungraded materials.

There are several excellent readability formulas, some of which are mentioned below. The ABE teacher should remember that a student should not be given materials which are above his instructional level. When this happens, he will become frustrated and discouraged and eventually will give up.

### Readability Formulas

Dale-Chall Readability Formula; A Formula for Predicting Readability, Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University.

Flesch Formula; Art of Readable Writing, Harper and Brothers, New York, N. Y.

Provision of Instruction - For many years, the emphasis in the classroom has been upon the "teaching," rather than the "learning" role. It has always been assumed that the responsibility for a student's acquisition of new ideas and insights was directly placed upon the teacher, and his or her ability to "get it across." This was accomplished, supposedly, by a variety of ways including cajoling, threatening, rewarding, aggressiveness or loud speech, or very soft speech. This assumption demanded that the teachers not only be far more clever than their students, but that they also be inexhaustible, since without their constant supply of information, the students were lost.

Gradually this theory has faded away, but it is inexcusable that it was ever taken seriously in adult education.

Adults do not need, nor do they wish, to be overly directed or controlled in their learning experiences. They are self-directed, autonomous human beings, and desire a strong sense of dignity and individual worth. Nothing will offend their sense of dignity more than to have an individual throw bits of information to them, like raw chunks of meat, and then demand that they accept them.

The adult is a learner. As such, the responsibility for learning should be placed upon him. He will choose, if allowed, what he learns and how he learns it, and will also decide the rate and speed at which he learns best. He will need helpful advice and suggestions as to how he should best continue his self-directed learning. This is where the teacher becomes a helpful aide who is prepared, not to answer the student's every question or to solve his every problem, but to help the student develop the skills he needs to solve his own problems. Adult students frequently are as qualified to teach some subjects as is the teacher. With a deep interest in the student, the teacher can help him find his own way. But find his own way he must.

#### EVALUATION

Through a process of evaluation, the Director can determine how effective the program is in relation to the stated goals and objectives. The Management Information System (MIS), the U.S. Office Economic Opportunity's grantee reporting system, is a valuable tool that Directors can use to assist them in performing quarterly evaluations. The three basic forms, Participant Characteristic Report, Program Progress Report, and Quarterly Narrative Report, will provide basic and essential information about the program.

After the information is gathered and organized on the specific reporting forms, the Director should analyze the information. Are you reaching the target population? How many enrollees? How many have dropped out? Why? And, other similar questions should come to mind as the MIS reports are reviewed.

In addition, as a part of the personnel policies, there should be an evaluation of staff performance. This staff evaluation should never be viewed as a threat by the staff members. The Director must assure the staff that the evaluation will serve as a useful tool for them to determine their areas of strengths and weakness. It will allow them an opportunity to modify their approach, method, technique, etc. Perhaps the students themselves can participate in evaluating the staff through an interview or a simple questionnaire.

It may be appropriate to include a yearly evaluation by outside experts as a regular part of the program. Prior to contracting with anyone to perform this service, the Director should know what the evaluation should include—areas of specific concern, and potential problem areas. He should then seek out someone who is capable of dealing with these areas.

After the evaluation—either internal or external—is completed, specific action should be taken to correct deficiencies within the program. Evaluation for its own sake has no value—it must lead to specific action.

#### PROGRAM MODIFICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH EVALUATION RESULTS

As an evaluation is reviewed, it should reflect areas of deficiency or weakness as well as areas of strength. It will require a plan of action to modify those aspects of the program which are weak. Perhaps it will require that new materials be introduced into the curriculum. There may be a need for a better method of student recruitment. The evaluation may even prove that the goals and objectives of the program should be modified.

If the Director, staff and board are really committed to the program, they will not be discouraged by the evaluation results, no matter how major the areas of modification may appear. If it means that a more effective program will evolve, then modifying the program should be a pleasant task. However, it is not unusual to experience resistance to change, particularly if a certain procedure or method now being used appeared to be functioning. The Director will need the information to back up his suggested changes so that those affected by the changes will understand the reason and will be more willing to accept these modifications.

Evaluation must be viewed as an on-going process. As new methods and techniques are proven effective in Adult Basic Education, it may be necessary for modification before applying them to your program. The needs of your target population may change as society changes. Your staffing needs and theirs may change as the program is in operation. The only way the Director can be aware of a need for change and have a rational basis for making changes is through constant evaluations.

#### CONCLUSION

The first section of this manual discussed the magnitude of the problem of illiteracy in the United States. This problem presents a challenge for those involved in Adult Basic Education.

The Director of an ABE program must effectively carry out his responsibilities in order to fit all the pieces together to form a complete and successful program. The individual who is planning and developing a new program will find that the responsibilities outlined in Section III will probably have to be carried out in the order in which they are presented. For the Directors of ABE programs currently in operation, it will be necessary to perform the duties they are responsible for but not necessarily in any particular sequence. A Director may have to perform several duties at the same time—selecting a new staff, providing in-service training, and selecting new equipment. These may all be accomplished within the same week. However, the important point to remember is that each of the duties must be fulfilled whenever they occur during operation of the program in order to have a successful ABE program.

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